



City of Alexandria

Transportation Commission

Regular Meeting

October 19, 2016
7:00 p.m.
Council Workroom

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Councilman John Chapman, Council Tim Lovain, Chair Jerry King, Commissioner David Brown, Councilman Tim Lovain, Commissioner Jake Jakubek, Commissioner Ryan Jones, Commissioner Stephen Klejst, Commissioner James Lewis, Commissioner Melissa McMahon, Commissioner Christine Michaelis, and Commissioner Carolyn Schroeder

Staff Present: Allan Fye – T&ES, Patrick Reed - T&ES, and Carrie Sanders – T&ES, Steve Sindiong - T&ES, Karen Callahan -T&ES, Mary Catherine Collins, P&Z, Yon Lambert – T&ES

Chair Jerry King called the Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

1. September 2016 Meeting Minutes

Chair Jerry King asked if there were any edits to the September minutes. Mr. King stated he had provided edits to staff prior to the meeting. There being no additional edits, a motion to approve the minutes with edits was made by Commissioner Klejst and seconded by Commissioner Lewis. The minutes were voted on and unanimously approved.

2. Updates to Receive (Consent Items)

The Commission received Funding Updates and Project Updates on the King Street Metrorail Station; the Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail Station; the Old Town North Small Area Plan; the I-395 Express Lanes Project; and the Local Motion Rebrand (GOAlex).

Commissioner Lewis inquired about the Old Town North Small Area Plan traffic study timeline. T&ES Transportation Planning Acting Division Chief Steve Sindiong stated it should be completed in January or February 2017. Afterwards, it will be on the Transportation Commission's meeting agenda for endorsement for consistency with the Transportation Master Plan, on to the Planning Commission and finally be heard by City Council for adoption as part of the Small Area Plan.

Commissioner Michaelis asked for an update on the Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail Station. T&ES Acting Transit Services Division Chief Allan Fye responded money had been set aside for design work to improve the pedestrian plaza surrounding the station. The design is near 100% completion

and will remain shovel ready until adjacent properties begin redevelopment. For cohesion of the infrastructure, developers of the adjacent properties will provide the infrastructure for their properties and the station project.

Commissioner Kleist questioned when the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will be able to provide concrete answers regarding the business model of the I-395 Express Lanes Project. T&ES Deputy Director Carrie Sanders reported that VDOT will give an oral presentation to City Council on October 25, 2016 and staff will update the Commission with VDOT and Council comments. She also stated that the City will have to compete for the more than \$15M in toll revenues. The toll pricing will be determined by demand. VDOT will have a public hearing on the I-395 Express Lanes on Oct 26, 2016 at 6:30 pm at Francis C. Hammond Middle School.

Commissioner McMahon stated there are blogs discussing dissatisfaction with Metro's low level of service and their discussions of permanently reducing rail service hours. She wanted to know the City's position regarding the options WMATA is exploring and how the City communicates that to WMATA. Carrie Sanders indicated the City is still absorbing WMATA's proposals. Allan Fye added that a public hearing on the change in Metrorail service hours is October 20 from 12:30p.m. – 10:30 pm. There will be additional outreach at some of the high ridership stations. The public comment period will close on October 25. Public feedback will be provided to WMATA's Board of Directors in December 2016 as part of the final decision process. WMATA has proposed four different Metrorail hours of operation. They have also proposed supplemental bus service that may provide customers with travel alternatives when the rail system is closed. WMATA will also explore partnerships that encourage private carriers to provide late night service options to Metro customers. Mr. Fye stated the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), District of Columbia and Maryland all sent similar letters to WMATA laying out high level concerns regarding how important Metrorail is to the region. WMATA is again estimating that its operating costs will far outpace revenues. To close the gap, the agency is considering closing several stations during off-peak hours, decreasing how often trains run, and cutting some bus routes. One option would eliminate service to 20 low-ridership stations during off-peak hours (midday, evening, and weekends). Other options include reducing staff, increasing bus and rail fares, increasing peak-period rail headways from every six minutes to every eight, making weekend service less frequent, and asking Maryland, Virginia, and DC to contribute more funding.

3. Commission Updates

Councilman Lovain discussed that the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) discussed at their last meeting the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), and the need for better incidence response to reduce congestion. He also noted that there will be a Traffic Management Conference at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) on November 2.

Commissioner Jones reported the North Potomac Yard Advisory Group met on October 17, 2016. The focus was sustainability of open space. The meeting presentation exposed the need for continuity of bicycle facilities, including improved access to the Four Mile Run trail, and a continuous trail through the Linear Park to Potomac Avenue and to the Braddock Road Metrorail station.

Chair King welcomed Carolyn Schroeder as the newest member to the Commission who represents the Environmental Policy Commission, replacing Annika Moman.

4. Multimodal Transportation Grants

T&ES Acting Division Chief Steve Sindiong stated staff will be submitting grant applications to the

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for transportation projects eligible under the Transportation Alternatives Program and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program. Staff is requesting an \$800,000 grant from the Transportation Alternatives Program for a trail along the south side of Holmes Run between N. Ripley Street and N. Pickett Street. There is currently no trail in this location, but there is a dirt path. The City is proposing a pervious surface trail because it would be within a Resource Protection Area (RPA). This is a priority trail project in the Pedestrian and Bicycle chapter of the Transportation Master Plan. The City is also requesting a \$400,000 grant from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program for pedestrian safety improvements at the intersection of Seminary Road and Howard Street. There have been 26 crashes at this intersection since 2011. Some of the improvements could include curb extensions, crosswalks, and accessibility improvements. Staff requests the Commission's endorsement and ask that a letter be composed by the Commission to the Council. Staff will seek City Council's approval at their October 25, 2016 meeting. The applications are due on November 1, 2016. A motion to approve the grant request was made by Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Jakubek, voted on and unanimously approved.

5. FY 2018-27 Budget Guidance

T&ES Deputy Director Carrie Sanders announced that each year the City Manager presents a proposed City Budget to the City Council for consideration and action. As part of the budget process, a ten-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is developed for major capital projects in the City. Funding for the CIP comes from the City's general fund, grants, and other non-City sources such as developer contributions. Ms. Sanders said the budget is comprised of operating, capital improvement programs and a 5-year financial forecasting model. The operating budget is divided into focus areas. The transportation focus area is Livable, Green & Prospering City. The low rates of revenue growth combined with budget pressures related to schools and WMATA are resulting in additional needs of City funding sources. A meeting of the Boards and Commissions chairs is scheduled for October 24, 2016. The City Council Retreat is November 5 at which time Council will discuss budget priorities. City Council will provide additional guidance at its November 9 meeting. The City Manager will present his budget to City Council on February 21, 2016. On February 23, there will be a Public Budget Presentation at Beatley Library. There will be other opportunities for public comment such as online engagement that will begin in October, public hearings in March and April 2017, and budget work sessions from February 21 through April 19. The add/delete period will be from April 25 – May 1 with the adoption of the budget occurring on May 4.

Ms. Sanders reported the City Manager sent a memo to City Boards, Commissions and Committees asking them to prioritize service and investments in their areas. The memo included two questions that should be discussed among members. The first question is what are the highest priority services and initiatives within your policy area that you feel should be added or increased in the FY 2018 budget? The other question is what are the lowest priority services and initiatives that should be considered for reductions in FY 2018. After discussion, the Commission's budget guidance was to preserve the 2.2 cent transportation reservation as the top priority. The next priority is State of Repair. Chair King requested the Commissioners to identify potential reductions for FY 2018 and email him their choices by October 23 for him to have for the October 24 meeting he will be attending with other Board, Committees and Commission Chairs.

6. Other Business

Chair Jerry King reported that vehicle crashes are up 10.6% for the first six months of 2016. There was also an increase in pedestrian and cyclist deaths.

Chair King indicated he reached out to Commissioners regarding a nomination for Vice Chair of the Transportation Commission. As a result, Commissioner Stephen Kleist was the only nomination for Vice Chair. He asked for any other nominations. There being none, a vote was taken and Commissioner Kleist was voted in unanimously as Vice Chair for the Transportation Commission.

Chair King stated that in the recent past, someone was hit in a crosswalk. At the trial, the Judge determined that the vehicle driver was not at fault because a yield to pedestrian sign is not required by the City code. The City Attorney is working to bring the City code in compliance with the State code.

At 9:15 p.m., Commissioner Lewis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Jakubek, voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.